



The JOBS Program

PROVEN RESULTS

- Higher proportion of study participants found employment and in higher-paying jobs than those in randomized control groups
- Participants experience lower levels of depressed mood and fewer depressive episodes
- Populations at highest psychological risk for depression are helped most
- When funded by State or Federal government, program's cost rapidly offset by increased tax revenues associated with higher-paying jobs obtained by program participants



The JOBS Program is a group-based, psychological educational intervention that has the dual goals of promoting reemployment and enhancing the coping capacities of unemployed workers and their families. The intervention offers a system for delivery and evaluation of a job-search skill enhancement workshop for unemployed job seekers 17 to 65 years of age. Through a series of interactive sessions, The JOBS Program helps participants—

- Identify effective job-search strategies
- Improve job-search skills
- Learn how to overcome setbacks in the job-search process
- Increase self-esteem and confidence to implement one's job-search skills
- Remain motivated to engage and persist in job-search activities until they become reemployed

The intervention consists of recruiting unemployed job seekers to attend five intensive half-day workshop sessions held over a 1- to 2-week period. During the sessions, participants acquire and rehearse job-search skills in a safe and supportive learning environment, which is critical for effective learning of new skills.

INTENDED POPULATION

JOBS, as evaluated by NREPP*, has been implemented and studied mainly in urban locations. It included participants from diverse ethnic/racial, socioeconomic, educational and occupational backgrounds and with varying degrees of past work experience. The program is designed for persons 17 to 65 years of age who wish to gain paid employment. Job seekers may be experiencing barriers to employment or reemployment such as educational deficiencies, marginal access to job-search materials, and skills inconsistent with the existing job market. It also has been implemented in sites providing services to welfare-to-work clients.

HOW IT WORKS

The JOBS program is delivered during five half-day sessions in employment offices, social service settings, community settings, and outplacement programs. Because social support is key to participants' ability to learn new skills and face job-market challenges, the program is delivered to groups of 12 to 20 job seekers. JOBS workshop leaders use nondidactic, active-learning methods to engage participants. Workshop leaders model and reinforce supportive behavior and effective job-search activities and skills and work to create a supportive learning environment through exercises that provide opportunities for participants to learn from and support each other.



OUTCOMES

The JOBS Program has been evaluated and replicated in randomized trials involving thousands of unemployed workers and their partners. The program returns unemployed workers to new jobs more quickly, produces reemployment in jobs that pay more, and reduces mental health problems associated with prolonged unemployment, particularly among those most vulnerable to depression. In addition, the program has been shown to inoculate workers against the adverse effects of subsequent job loss and job-loss setbacks because they gain an enhanced sense of mastery over job-search challenges.

Workshop leaders help participants discover principles of successful and unsuccessful job-search strategies; model and role-play effective job-search activities and techniques, such as job interviews; and encourage active participation. Program participants are engaged in problem-solving processes to help them cope with unemployment-related stress, the job-search process, and the inevitable setbacks they will encounter. Recruitment begins in central organizational settings such as State employment offices or outplacement programs in corporate human resources departments.

JOBS Program workshop leaders (trainers) must be trained by master trainers from the Michigan Prevention Research Center. The master trainer or agency personnel should carefully choose workshop leaders who have demonstrated skills or experience in group facilitation and collaboration. They should be trained rigorously to be able to co-train together and to build trust among program participants. Training teams should consist of male/female pairs of co-trainers. The training is provided in a 7-week course that is offered at selected sites. A program manual, *JOBS: A Manual for Teaching People Successful Job Search Strategies*, outlines techniques for selecting and hiring workshop leaders and describes the training, design, and delivery of the Mock Job-Search Seminar and Trainer's Forum. It also includes implementation and evaluation materials for the five-session, job-search intervention.

PROGRAM DEVELOPERS

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* National Registry of Effective Programs and Practices

*Program detail and citations can be obtained at
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